

Karma International is pleased to present the gallery debut of Urban Zellweger. Born in 1991 and living, studying and working in Zurich for the past years, Zellweger has carved out a body of work that counterbalances reality and mystification in paintings with a strange and layered quiet sobriety.

Firmly entrenched in a lineage beginning roughly with Reginald Marsh and tracing its way through David Hockney to Sean Landers, as well as Kai Althoff and the “bad girl“ painters of the New York 1990s like Sue Williams and Nicole Eisenman, Zellweger crafts visual quips and mythological geographies in a fluid, illustrational style that plays on layered perception to enfold consistently changing and engaging stories. His style, on one hand, consciously echoes his teachers and praises them like a swotty student, but at the same time seems to have unhooked itself a long time ago and settled in its very own realm of strangeness. Each of the paintings is a mix of human interaction and organic abstraction, ranging from shape and line to narrative tableau. The fleshy vines that crawl and entwine across *snails*, *butterflies*, *butterfly*, *chair* and *fly* trace out strange human forms, their background coming through at some places like cloisonné, revealing deformed organica or a human face. This same theme is played in *inside a hospital*, a work depicting a doctor whose coat reveals an inner fantasy that is all at once a dreamscape, fleshscape and inner landscape. The punk protagonists in *squat* are autistic and firm, settled in a world that is crisp and colorful, yet somewhat dystopian. In all the works provocative ideas slide by at every turn, confrontation and farce walking hand in hand in a subversive strategy that creates combinations somehow full of both irony and complete seriousness.

Urban Zellweger was in a group exhibition at UPSTATE, Zurich, a solo show at Plymouth Rock, Zurich in 2015, and will have an exhibition at Shoot the Lobster, New York in 2016. His work has been shown in Oslo at Astrup Fearnley Museum and 1857, curated by Hacienda Zurich.

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